

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 25272 301824Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3627

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 25272

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR

SUBJECT: SOVIET DCM ON GISCARD'S VISIT TO THE USSR
AND OTHER MATTERS

REF: PARIS 24034; PARIS 24616

1. SUMMARY: IN A COURTESY CALL LINKED TO THE CURRENT VISIT IN FRANCE OF SECDEF SCHLESINGER, THE SOVIET DCM TALKED AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT GISCARD'S UPCOMING VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, THE POSSIBLE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE, AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO EMBASSIES. END SUMMARY

2. SOVIET DCM PANKOV PAID A RETURN COURTESY CALL TO THE EMBASSY TODAY TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE CURRENT VISIT IN FRANCE OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER. HE WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST VISIT OF A SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SINCE THAT OF SECRETARY LAIRD IN 1971 AND WAS GIVEN A REHASH OF CURRENT PRESS COVERAGE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. THE PRESS HAS QUOTED MEMBERS OF THE VISITING PARTY THAT NATO STANDARDIZATION IS AN AREA OF CURRENT INTEREST AND THIS WAS OF INTEREST
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PAGE 02 PARIS 25272 301824Z

TO PANKOV.

3. ASKED ABOUT THE GISCARD VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH BEGINS OCTOBER 14, PANKOV PORTRAYED IT AS AN OFFICIAL VISIT IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD. HE IMPLIED THAT HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS ARE ENVISIONED UNDER THE FRANCO-SOVIET AGREEMENT AND THAT THE CALENDAR WAS CAUSING THIS VISIT MORE THAN WERE ANY SUBJECTS OF URGENT INTEREST. UNDER QUESTIONING, HE SAID THAT FOLLOW-UP ON HELSINKI WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE DISCUSSED (POINTING WITH PRIDE TO SOVIET LIBERALIZATION OF VISA RULES FOR RESIDENT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS). FURTHER QUESTIONING ELICITED THE STATEMENT THAT THE BALANCE OF TRADE WOULD BE A PRINCIPAL TOPIC, SINCE THE FRENCH NOW SELL MORE IN RUSSIA THAN THEY BUY WHICH IS A MATTER OF CONCERN IN MOSCOW. PANKOV AGREED THAT DISARMAMENT INCLUDING GENEVA AND VIENNA TOPICS WOULD INEVITABLY ARISE BUT COULD NOT SAY WHAT ANGLE OR APPROACH TO THESE SUBJECTS WOULD BE DECIDED BY HIS GOVERNMENT. HE HAD SEEN NO SIGNS OF ANY EVOLUTION IN THE FRENCH ATTITUDE ON THESE SUBJECTS ALTHOUGH HE VOLUNTEERED HE HAD SEEN A RECENT TRIAL BALLOON IN LE MONDE (PARIS 24232).

4. PANKOV WAS UNWILLING TO RISK ANY PREDICTION ON TIMING OF A EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE. HE SAID THAT NATIONAL PARTY MEETINGS ARE STILL GOING ON, CITING PARTICULARLY THE POLISH ONE SCHEDULED FOR EARLY OCTOBER, AND PREDICTED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SAY BY EARLY OCTOBER WHEN AND WHERE -- AND WHETHER -- THE EUROPEAN PARTY CONFERENCE WOULD TAKE PLACE. HE OPINED THAT REACHING CONSENSUS INSIDE NATIONAL PARTIES AND BETWEEN THEM WAS A COMPLICATED MATTER.

5. PANKOV LOOKED FORWARD TO MORE FREQUENT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO EMBASSIES IN THE FUTURE AND WELCOMED A SUGGESTION THAT THESE MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED ALSO AT THE FIRST SECRETARY-COUNSELOR LEVEL. (THIS EMBASSY HAS FOUND THE SOVIET EMBASSY WORKING LEVEL TO BE CURIOUSLY SHY IN RETURNING VISITS BY EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICERS.)

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PAGE 03 PARIS 25272 301824Z

6. COMMENT: PANKOV, A GENIAL AND AFFABLE FORMER PARTY APPARACHIK, HAS SOUGHT OUT THIS EMBASSY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY. HE APPEARS TO DESIRE MORE FREQUENT MEETINGS AND SOME DEGREE OF INFORMATION EXCHANGE. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF THIS INTEREST IN OPENNESS EXTENDS ALSO TO HIS SUBORDINATES.
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